

Inspection of a good school: Old Hall Primary School

Springside View, Bury, Lancashire BL8 4LU

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 September 2023

Outcome

Old Hall Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of Old Hall Primary School. They benefit from positive and caring relationships with staff. Pupils feel that their school is a happy and safe place to be. They know that there is someone who they can talk to if they have a concern or a worry.

Pupils rise to the high expectations that the school has for their academic achievement. They are engaged and interested in their learning. They achieve well.

Typically, pupils behave well. When they do not behave as they should, staff act calmly and confidently to help them to regulate their own behaviour.

Pupils learn how to look after their own mental health. Staff encourage them to treat each other with kindness and to celebrate one another's achievements, for example through rewards such as the class award statue that pupils proudly display on their desks each week if they win.

Pupils make the most of opportunities to develop their social and moral skills beyond the curriculum. For example, they recently joined parents, carers and staff to complete a charity running challenge. They were proud to have raised funds for a local community centre that gives families access to important services.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Over time, it has ensured that the curriculum remains broad, balanced and enriched so that it meets pupils' needs and interests and prepares them well for their next steps in education.

The school has recently provided teachers with helpful training for individual subjects and with support to enhance their curriculum thinking. This is allowing the school to review and refine the content and order of subject curriculums further. As a result, in many

subjects, the important knowledge that pupils should acquire and remember is clearly set out in a logical way. Pupils build securely on what they already know and make links between subjects. However, in a minority of subjects, the school has not fully completed this work. Teachers are sometimes unclear about the precise content that pupils should learn. This prevents pupils from developing a deep understanding of subject-specific concepts and, as a result, they do not achieve as well as they could.

Teachers deliver the curriculum well. They give clear explanations and are skilled at identifying and addressing misconceptions that pupils may have during lessons. The school has recently introduced more rigorous checks on pupils' learning over time. In some subjects, teachers use the information they gather from these checks well to shape future learning. However, in other subjects they do not use assessment information effectively to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. In these subjects, pupils do not build well enough on prior learning.

The school successfully uses a phonics programme to help pupils to learn to read. It has recently invested in further training and resources to expand staff expertise across the school. This is helping to ensure that staff teach the programme with confidence and consistency. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they learn each week. Staff swiftly give them extra support if they need it. As a result, most pupils learn to read fluently.

The school is adept at identifying and supporting pupils' additional needs. It works well with external agencies to secure effective help for pupils with SEND. It provides staff with useful information about pupils' needs so that teachers can adapt the implementation of the curriculum when needed. This helps to give pupils with SEND access to the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and helps them achieve well.

The school environment is calm and purposeful. In lessons, pupils generally learn without distraction from others. The school has clear strategies in place to deal effectively with any incidents of misbehaviour.

Pupils relish the many opportunities that the school provides for them to develop themselves beyond the academic curriculum. For example, they develop their confidence by taking on leadership responsibilities in their roles as sports ambassadors, eco-representatives and playground buddies. They enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as indoor athletics, gardening and dance.

During a recent period of transition and change, the school, supported by the governing body, has increased its level of engagement and collaboration with staff. Staff feel that this has had a positive impact on their workload and well-being. The school supports them well in fulfilling their roles and developing themselves professionally. It engages parents well, for example in its charity work with the local community and in its guidance for parents on helping their children to read.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school is still refining and developing the curriculum. Teachers are not clear about the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they should learn it. Consequently, some pupils do not develop sufficient depth of subject-specific knowledge and understanding. The school should ensure that it completes its curriculum review. It should provide further subject-specific support and training for teachers so that they are clear about the essential knowledge that pupils must have and remember in all curriculum areas.
- In some subjects, the use of teachers' checks on pupils' learning is underdeveloped. The school does not identify and address misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge as well as it could. This hinders the learning of some pupils. The school should ensure that teachers consistently use checks on pupils' knowledge and understanding to adapt future teaching so that pupils can build securely on their prior learning and achieve well.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	105294
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10291387
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Barrie Rostron
Headteacher	Nicola Carlile
Website	www.oldhallps.com
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher of the school was appointed in January 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to

teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She also spoke with subject leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.

- The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. She also spoke with staff to discuss the support that they receive from leaders.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils. She also spoke with some pupils about school life.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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